

# Lynchburg Parking Authority

## Minutes

City Manager's Office  
900 Church Street  
Lynchburg, VA 24504

Tuesday, March 6, 2007  
5:00 p.m.

### Members Present

Dennis Howard, Chair  
Michael Gillette, Vice Chairman  
Bert Dodson  
Tom Gerdy  
Linda Jones  
Terri Proffitt  
Kelvin Moore

### Members Absent

### Staff Present

Kimball Payne  
Charlene Montford  
Lee Newland  
Nicole Gilkeson

### 1. Call to Order

Mr. Howard called the meeting to order.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The Authority approved the minutes as distributed with no amendments.

### 3. Discussion with Mr. Lee Bourque, Carl Walker, Inc.

Mr. Bourque stated that he would be in Lynchburg from March 6<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup> to inventory parking spaces and conduct preliminary stakeholder meetings. He stated that in his meetings thus far, he has learned that there appear to be several themes regarding views on who should have parking; these mindsets will eventually conflict as the City continues to grow. The City wants to have a blend of mixed uses downtown, but these use bring out parking conflicts between retail, residents, and employers. He stated that the City needs strategic planning to discover and implement policy changes as well as change attitudes about parking. Currently, economic development is outpacing the planning for parking. In terms of the Main Street deck, he stated that there is a clear opportunity to serve more people and make more money. He believes that one of his top recommendations will be to eliminate numbered or assigned spaces. Mr. Payne said there is also an issue of vandalism in the Main Street deck which can be attributed to the low turnover and consequential lack of eyes on the interior parking levels. Mr. Bourque stated that property facility management requires constant observance of entry and exit, and this allows for more parkers. The goal of a successful parking management strategy allows for a five percent vacancy rate at any given time.

Councilman Dodson asked how many spaces were reserved and how many spaces provided two hour public parking on the upper level of the Main Street deck, and inquired about control systems. Mr. Bourque stated that aging structures may not be built adequately for a control system because of the way in which the deck was constructed. In the case of the Midtown deck, a management strategy could not use control methods which would allow for the backup of traffic onto Main Street. Mr. Dodson asked if other localities had dealt with a backlash from transitioning from assigned spaces to a different strategy. Mr. Bourque said there are no cities that he has worked with that have assigned spaces; it is inefficient and does not maximize revenue. He said that this move would make sense compared to national standards, if it is done correctly in graduated steps to find the correct balance.

Dr. Gillette asked about the opportunity to successfully “overbook” a garage. He asked Mr. Bourque how the private sector is able to make a profit while municipalities are finding that parking is not profit-based. Mr. Bourque stated that parking is a market-driven process and that the entire City has to change together. Dr. Gillette stated that he hears that the City has too much parking and he also hears there is not enough parking from others. Mr. Bourque stated that in Lynchburg there can be no private investors to deal with transient parking because the City is not charging and is therefore subsidizing parking. He stated that the current system of parking is dysfunctional and being held back by policies that are not letting the market work. He stated that eventually, on-street parking problems will stall retail development, and that residents must find places to park other than on the street. The system must be consistent and change must be backed from the top down. Mr. Payne stated that one of the biggest challenges would be to find parking for individuals who own businesses and live above them.

Mr. Bourque stated that removing inhibitors to efficient parking will hold back the need for structured parking. While most people are familiar with the assertion that parking structures cost \$15,000 per space, in actuality, the hard costs translate into \$21,000 per space.

Councilman Dodson asked if adding meters could be a recommendation of the study. Mr. Bourque stated that on-street parking should cost more than off-street parking and that meters are self-serving regulators of parking.

Mr. Moore asked how Lynchburg compared to other localities in which the firm performed parking analyses. Mr. Bourque stated that the good things about Lynchburg were that Lynchburg was not out of space and had not lost their building faces. He did say that the one problem was that Lynchburg does not have high quality parking decks in comparison to other localities.

Mr. Gerdy asked about parking shuttles. Mr. Bourque stated that parking in remote locations is only successful for employees and if they are located in nice, safe places.

Ms. Jones said that the biggest stumbling block is the fact that employees have been moving their cars around in on-street spaces every two hours for over thirty years.

Dr. Gillette said that the study must show where employees will go when they are driven off the street. Mr. Bourque responded that there are often small pockets of available parking that are found by downtown workers more easily than by retail shoppers.

Dr. Gillette asked about the implementation time frame. Mr. Bourque stated that implementation could begin once buy-in occurs and when people get engaged in the discussion. He stated that the final report will serve as a powerful tool showing parking dynamics by listing the issues and providing a plan backed by reasons, for what the City should attempt to accomplish.

Mr. Payne asked what homework the Authority should be doing; Mr. Bourque stated that the Authority should just be getting comfortable talking about parking issues.

#### **4. Other business**

There was no other business.

#### **5. Next steps**

Mr. Howard asked if the Parking Authority should respond to the recent News and Advance article about downtown parking. The group agreed that the Authority should respond as the study provides appropriate information. Ms. Proffitt stated that she could put an article in the Downtown Leader and Dr. Gillette stated that we should notify the media of the public forums.

Mr. Dodson stated that the Finance Committee had approved a request to City Council for up to \$250,000 for implementation of the study from the City's reserves fund and that the Physical Development Committee had been briefed on improvements to the Midtown deck. Staff will provide that information for the Parking Authority. Staff will also be working with the consultant to provide information on downtown development and a list of stakeholders to contact.

#### **6. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned with no further business. Staff will update the Parking Authority on the schedule of stakeholder meetings and the public forum. The next Parking Authority meeting is scheduled for April 10.